

THE LETELLIER DESPATCH.

whether the manner of so doing was judicious, or whether it would not have been well if he had made himself familiar with the subject before coming to this country, knowing that the question had already been raised—one thing is certain, that it was very desirable that so grave a precedent should not have been established without full consideration, and upon the advice of the Home Government.

The *Times*, in a thoughtful and impartial leading article on the subject, calls attention to some grave considerations. It is, of course, written from an Imperial point of view, and from that point of view it must be judged. The writer remarks that the Governor in every Colony is looked upon as something more than the passive exponent of the views of its Parliamentary Ministers. He is accepted as the delegate of the Sovereign, as the confidential emissary of the Home Government, to which, as well as to the Colonial Government, he owes a responsibility; but "the moral that Colonial Governors will draw from the despatch is that of unconditional obedience, while a hundred signs warn us of the necessity of directing the attention of Colonial Governors to the times and circumstances when they should resist the counsels of their ordinary advisers."

The *Times* maintains that Lord Lorne was right in his reading of the Dominion Act, and that the plain meaning is that while a Governor-General appointed a Lieutenant-Governor, on the advice of his Ministers, the removal of such a subordinate lay within his personal responsibility. "The Viceroy was intended to be a screen sheltering Provincial Governments and Governors, from being continually affected by the political vicissitudes of the central Government. Henceforth, however, the Dominion Act must be read as if a Lieutenant-Governor must

be removed as he is appointed by the Governor-General in Council." The *Times* especially censures Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, for not suggesting to Lord Lorne the prudence of testing the electors on the issues raised.

For ourselves, our task is not to express either praise or blame in any quarter, but simply to point out the constitutional importance of the despatch. Yet the words of Mr. Baden Powell, in a recent article on Reform in Victoria, in the *Fortnightly Review* for June last, occur to our minds :

"The great material good of a continued citizenship in a British Empire, is held to be that its component parts will thereby be enabled to steer clear of the rocks and shoals of a too energetic, too full-blooded political life, on which have been ship-wrecked the States of South America, as were those of Mediæval Italy and Ancient Greece. Our colonies are young as yet in political life, and no doubt the substantial and assured progress of the British Colony, as compared with that of any other nation—no doubt the fact that British Colonies have never afforded an instance of civil or intercolonial war—is largely, if not entirely due to the circumstance, that the energetic first flush of political life called out by the inauguration of self-government in new and young communities, is advised and controlled by means of the Governor, the Colonial office, and in the last instance, appeal to the Imperial Parliament, that is, by all the legislative and administrative experiences of the very home of Parliamentary Government."

The following is the despatch addressed to Lord Lorne :—

"Downing-street, July 3rd, 1879.

"MY LORD,—Her Majesty's Government have given their attentive consideration to your request, for their instructions with reference to the recommendation made by your Ministers, that Mr. Letellier, the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec should be removed from his office. It will not have escaped your observation, in making this request, that the constitutional question to